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FOREIGN LANGUAGE BELOW THE NINTH GRADE--WHAT ARE WE DOING.

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RESULTS ARE GIVEN OF A 1965 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGNED TO SHOW INDIANAPOLIS FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM PRACTICES BELOW THE NINTH GRADE IN COMPARISON WITH THE PRACTICES OF 46 OTHER LARGE CITIES. QUESTIONS WERE ASKED ON (1) LANGUAGES TAUGHT, (2) LEVEL AT WHICH LANGUAGE STUDY IS BEGUN, (3) PROGRAM CONTINUITY, (4) PUPIL PARTICIPATION, (5) HOW TIME FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY WAS ACHIEVED AND ALLOTTED, (6) TEACHING AND TESTING MATERIALS, (7) ARTICULATION WITH HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS, (8) TEACHER TRAINING, AND (9) GRADING SYSTEMS. THE BASIC QUESTIONS, A TABULATION OF REPLIES, AND BRIEF SUMMARIES ARE INCLUDED. THIS ARTICLE IS A REPRINT FROM "THE MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL," VOLUME 50, NUMBER 2, FEBRUARY 1966, PAGES 101-104. (AF)

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Academic Report

Foreign Language Below the Ninth Grade: What Are We Doing?

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EARLY in January of 1965, as a part of the experimental junior high school pilot program in foreign languages in the Indianapolis Public Schools, a questionnaire dealing with (1) languages taught, (2) level at which language study is begun, (3) continuity of program, (4) pupil participation, (5) how time for foreign language was achieved, (6) daily and (7) weekly time allotments, (8) teaching and (9) testing materials, (10) articulation with high school programs, (11) teacher training, and (12) grading systems, was sent to forty-nine school systems in large cities of the country. Of these systems forty-five, or 91.8 per cent, replied. Cities replying were Akron, Atlanta, Baltimore, Birmingham, Boston, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dallas, Dayton, Denver, Detroit, Fort Worth, Houston, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, (Florida), Kansas City, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Louisville, Memphis, Miami, New Orleans, New York City, Norfolk, Oakland, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Portland, Richmond, Rochester, Saint Louis, Saint Paul, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Syracuse, Tampa, Toledo, Tulsa, and Wichita. Of the forty-five schools tabulated (actually there was a forty-sixth late-comer) only three reported no foreign language program below the ninth grade.

The basic questions of the questionnaire, a tabulation of replies, and some observations follow. Complete tabulations of replies to questions VI and VII have been omitted on account of their cumbersome detail, with only the summaries of replies being used. In some instances, the number of tabulated replies exceeds the number of participating schools and indicates that practices in some schools follow more than one pattern. No attempt has been made to identify practices in individual schools.

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Questionnaire

I. What foreign languages do you teach below the 9th grade?

A. Languages taught are:

Language	*Number of schools*
Spanish	36
French	34
German	18
Latin	8
Russian	5
Chinese	2
Italian	1
Hebrew	1
No program	3

B. The above languages are taught in the following combinations:

Language	*Number of schools*
French	6
French, German	1
French, Spanish	7
French, Spanish, Latin	1
French, Spanish, Russian	3
French, German, Spanish	9
French, German, Spanish, Latin	6
French, German, Spanish, Russian, and Chinese	1
French, German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Hebrew, and Italian	1
Spanish	8
Spanish, Latin	1

Summary

Of the total of eight languages taught in the schools surveyed, Spanish appears with greatest frequency. The combination of French, German, and Spanish appears more often than any single language, or any other combination of languages.

Eight schools offer four or more languages, thirteen offer three languages, and nine offer two languages, while fourteen offer only one.

II. At what level do you begin foreign language study?

Grade	*Number of schools*
1	2
2	1
3	10
4	9
5	7
6	7
7	7
8	2

Summary

Proportionally, these programs are begun as follows:

Below Grade 3	6.7 per cent
Grades 3, 4	42.2 per cent
Grades 5, 6	31.1 per cent
Grades 7, 8	20.0 per cent

23.8 per cent of schools having programs begin them as low as the third grade. 15.5 per cent of schools teaching language begin at fifth grade level, and an equal number begin in the seventh grade. Only 4.4 per cent of programs reported are begun as late as the eighth grade.

III. Is your program continuous from its inception through high school?

	Number of schools
A. Yes	32
	Number of schools
From grade 1	1
From grade 2	1
From grade 3	4
From grade 4	7
From grade 5	4
From grade 6	7
From grade 7	6
From grade 8	2
B. No	6
Not yet but planning	5
Not answered	1

IV. How is participation in foreign language determined?

	Number of schools
A. All pupils	9
B. All pupils early levels, voluntary later	5
C. All pupils early levels, according to ability later	3
D. Voluntary basis	13
E. High ability groups only	7
F. Any groups that can be scheduled	5
G. Building teachers decide, entire class participates	1

Summary—Questions III and IV

Seventeen, or 40.0 per cent of schools reported, at some point in their program teach foreign language to all pupils. All of these begin their programs at the sixth grade or lower. Fourteen have programs that are continuous through high school and two others are planning such continuity.

Of the thirteen schools, or 30.9 per cent of all schools tallied, which offer foreign language purely on a voluntary basis, seven have continuous programs.

Of the seven schools, or 16.6 per cent, whose offering is to high ability students only, six have continuing programs.

Among the five, or 11.9 per cent of the total number tallied, who offer elementary school language to any groups that can be scheduled, only two have programs continuous through high school.

V. How did you achieve time in your daily program for foreign language?

	Number of schools
A. By taking time from other subjects	20
B. By re-dividing day to provide an extra period	12
C. By lengthening school day	2
D. By creating after school classes	1
E. Combination of methods above	
1. A and B	1
2. A and C	3
3. B and C	2
F. Undecided but mandated	1
G. Question not answered	1

Summary

Twenty-four, or 57.1 per cent of the forty-two schools reporting programs, gain some or all time for them by taking time from other subjects.

Fifteen, or 35.7 per cent, have used re-division of the school day as one means of making another instruction period.

Eight of the seventeen schools who, at one time or another, offer language to all pupils, indicate that time for this program has come from other subjects, three show a re-divided day, two a lengthened day, and three use combinations of these methods to achieve the necessary time. Only one has the problem still under consideration.

VI. How often do your classes meet on a weekly basis?

Class meetings per week average as follows:

3.1 in the third grade
3.1 in the fourth grade
3.1 in the fifth grade
3.8 in the sixth grade
4.0 in the seventh grade
4.1 in the eighth grade

56.9 per cent of the schools having seventh grade foreign language and 62.8 per cent of schools having it in the eighth grade have classes five days per week.

VII. How long are your class periods?

Class periods average in length approximately as follows:

Grade 3—19 minutes
Grade 4—24 minutes
Grade 5—33 minutes
Grade 6—33 minutes
Grade 7—37 minutes
Grade 8—38 minutes

In grades three and four, the average number of minutes per day is 21.5.

In grades five and six, classes average 33 minutes in length.

In grades seven and eight, the average number of minutes per day is 38.

In grade seven, 54 per cent of the schools reporting programs have class periods 35 or more minutes in length.

In grade eight, 68.9 per cent of the thirty-nine schools offering work at this level have classes of 35 or more minutes.

One-third of all schools with foreign language in the seventh and eighth grades have periods of fifty minutes or more.

In the number of minutes per week spent in language study, averages are these:

Grade 3— 69
Grade 4— 77
Grade 5— 74
Grade 6— 77
Grade 7—175
Grade 8—184

Fifty per cent of the seventh and eighth grade classes reported spend two hundred minutes or more per week in language study.

VIII. How are your *teaching* materials prepared and selected?

	Number of schools
A. Commercially prepared	31
B. Locally prepared	26
C. Uniform throughout city	32
D. Chosen by individual teacher	5
E. Question not answered	1

Note: Many schools use commercial materials for basic work and locally prepared supplemental materials

The sections A, B, C, and D, in this question were checked in the following combinations:

A	—5	B	—1
AB	—2	BC	—6
ABC	—13	BCD	—1
ABCD	—3	C	—1
AC	—8	D	—1

Summary

Thirty-one, or 73.8 per cent, of those schools which report elementary school foreign language programs use commercially prepared teaching materials.

Twenty-six, or 61.4 per cent, indicate some use of locally prepared materials.

Of the forty-two schools with programs, thirty-two, or 76.1 per cent, show uniformity in materials used throughout the systems.

IX. How are your *testing* materials prepared and selected?

	Number of schools
A. Commercially prepared	16
B. Locally prepared	28
C. Uniform	17
D. Prepared by the individual teacher	28
E. No testing program	1
F. Question not answered	1

Testing materials used were checked in these combinations:

A	—2	B	—2
AB	—1	BC	—2
ABC	—2	BCD	—5
ABCD	—5	BD	—7
ABD	—4	C	—2
AC	—1	D	—6
AD	—1	No testing	—1
		No answer	—1

Summary

Twenty-eight, or 66.6 per cent, of the schools indicate that testing materials are at least in part locally prepared.

Coincidentally, 28 schools, or 66.6 per cent, indicate preparation of materials by the individual teacher. Combinations of commercially prepared materials with those locally and individually prepared exist in 13 instances, or in 30 per cent of the schools.

Seventeen, or 40.4 per cent, of the systems indicate uniformity in testing materials.

Sixteen, or 38.0 per cent, of schools reporting show the use of commercial testing materials alone.

X. How is articulation with high school foreign language attained?

	Number of schools
A. 1 year junior high school = 1 year high school	1
B. 1 year junior high school = ½ year high school	7
C. Based on testing and teacher evalution	4
D. Based on teacher evaluation and recommendation	5

E. Based on testing, teacher evaluation and recommendation	2
F. Pupils begin with first semester in high school regardless of previous work	9
G. Pupils enter special first semester classes	1
H. 2½ years junior high school = 1 year high school	1
I. Homogeneous grouping after FLES	2
J. Undecided, planning	6
K. Not answered	1

Summary

The greatest single frequency, 9 or 20.9 per cent, among the tallied replies to the question dealing with articulation, indicates high school placement in first semester work regardless of previous foreign language experience. This number does not, however, equal the total number of those schools whose placement is achieved by the various listed methods of evaluating achievement.

It should be noted that the frequency next highest, 7, or 16.2 per cent of these schools, indicates the equivalency of 1 year in junior high school to ½ year in high school as a basis for placement.

XI. What is the professional training of your classroom teachers of foreign language?

	Number of schools
A. Individual teachers	
1. Language-trained	38
2. Language-trained for audio-lingual teaching	29
3. Trained, using ETV with follow-up	14
4. Untrained, using ETV with follow-up	21
5. Untrained, using radio with follow-up	3
6. Untrained, using ETV, no follow-up	2
7. Not answered	1
B. School system	
1. Trained teachers only	20
2. Trained and untrained	18
3. Untrained teachers only	3
4. TV used for instruction	22
5. Radio used for instruction	3
6. No information	1

Summary

Thirty-eight, or 90 per cent, of the schools responding show the use of trained language teachers in their programs, and twenty-one, or 50 per cent, report the use of untrained teachers.

Twenty schools, or 47.6 per cent, report the exclusive use of trained teachers, while eighteen schools, or 42.9 per cent, report the combined use of trained and untrained teachers. Only three schools, or 7 per cent, report the exclusive use of untrained teachers.

Twenty-five, or 59.5 per cent of those reporting, indicate the use of TV and/or radio as a means of instruction in their programs.

XII. What type of grading do you use?

	Number of schools
A. Letter grades	18
B. Numerical grades	3
C. Satisfactory or unsatisfactory	2
D. No grades given	8
E. Combinations of above systems	
1. A and B	1
2. A and C	3
3. A and D	5
F. Under study	1
G. Not answered	1

Summary

Letter grades alone, or letter grades at one level and another type of grades at another level, are given in twenty-seven, or 64 per cent, of all schools for whom responses were tabulated.

Numerical grades are used in only four schools, or 9.5 per cent; Satisfactory—unsatisfactory are used as grades in five schools, or 11.9 per cent; thirteen schools, or 30.9 per cent, give no grades in one or more phases of their programs.

The instances in which no grades are given occur in all but two cases below the seventh grade level. Nine schools, or 21.4 per cent, use a combination of grading systems.

Conclusion

This questionnaire was designed to show Indianapolis practices in its foreign language programs below the ninth grade in comparison to the practices of other large cities. Its questions ask what is being done in this field, not why, nor how well, and its results provide information without pointing to any obvious conclusions.

The high 91.8 per cent response to the mailed questionnaire gives to the information contained in these tabulations a higher validity than had the response been the usual 50 per cent. This information may prove of value to any school system in need of such materials for comparative purposes. It can also give a sense of direction to research which must yet be done.